

August 7, 1961

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY

FROM: *WWR*

SUBJECT: Initial Comments on Acheson Paper of August 1, 1961

1. First, an apparently tactical item to which I shall return. In phase I (p. 1) I should add as a major propaganda theme: the character of the East German regime and the ugly personal history of Ulbricht. At a time when maximum pressure is on us to recognize the GDR -- and we wish to deflect that pressure -- it is wholly proper for us to dramatize the kind of regime that exists sixteen years after the war in East Germany. In no sense have the political processes in East Germany been "normalized."
2. In connection with the campaign outlined on pp. 1-2 I would suggest for consideration someone more of the world -- less of the bureaucracy -- than Gerry Smith (whom I greatly respect). Perhaps C. D. Jackson, who has gone through several serious German exercises and is gifted in disciplined psywar activities.
3. Now the basic point. It is evident from Secretary Rusk's recent discussions in Paris as well as from this paper that the West's fundamental reply to Khrushchev's demand for recognition is this: we are not prepared to recognize East Germany now; but we are prepared to encourage the West Germans to engage in a widening range of contact and discourse with the East Germans. It is the Mixed German Committee -- including its new instruction "to increase the mutually beneficial trade and credits between the two parts of Germany" (Tab A, p. 2) -- which is very nearly the heart of the Acheson proposal.

~~SECRET~~

SANITIZED

NLX-78-651+UPHLD UNDER NLX64-126

BY *8/8/80* NARS, DATE 6/6/80 + 12/84



5. I submit that our fundamental task here is to change the whole cast of thinking among our own people and the West Germans concerning this problem, the roots of which go deep into the past.

6. In the past Washington has been hesitant about "flexibility" with respect to the East Germans for two reasons. First, it was felt that it would weaken Adenauer's hand; and it would weaken his hand, in particular, with respect to his efforts to bind West Germany more closely into the Western community. In Adenauer's mind -- and in the minds of others -- talks among the Germans looking toward greater unity were regarded as an alternative to a more intimate set of structural relations between Bonn and the West. And this sense of alternatives was heightened by the cast of domestic German politics where the Social Democrats were generally believed to be taking a less rigid stance towards the East and a less profound commitment towards the West. Second, it was felt that any American flexibility might raise in German minds the notion that we were "negotiating a settlement over their heads;" and that if we were to move this way the Germans might be tempted to say: if anyone is going to make a deal with Moscow, we shall make that deal.

7. On the German side there were also inhibitions against "flexibility." The Germans fear that any apparent willingness to go this route would be interpreted in the West as a sign of flagging loyalty towards the Western community and as the thin end of the wedge for a Soviet-German deal at the expense of Western security and unity.

8. Thus, in part out of mutual deference to each side's believed sensibilities, we have been dealing with the West Germans on an uncandid basis. The problem that must now be solved is a problem of human understanding and mutual confidence, especially between the West Germans and the U. S. On our side we must make it clear that it is our assessment of the West Germans that "they can be trusted" with a higher degree of flexibility with respect to East Germany; and that we believe such flexibility is in the common long-run Western interest. Specifically, we should let them know that we believe:

- that Western unity is now so solid that we can continue to build it while extending our influence to the East via negotiations with the East Germans;
- that the West German-East German economic and political balance has shifted so radically in favor of the West that West Germany will surely exert the greater net influence in any such negotiations; and
- that in our view there does not appear to be any dangerous difference in view about the future of Germany as between the two major German political parties.

9. In short, the issue of "flexibility" should cease to be an issue of relative "hardness" or "softness" towards the Communists. It should become an instrument of common Western policy, in which the strategy and tactics are designed in common.

10. If this kind of understanding can be generated in coming weeks and months between ourselves and the West Germans I believe the resistance in Paris can be overcome; although we should be aware that one source of that resistance may be the fear that this flexible policy may be too successful and the prospects for German unity, on terms acceptable to the West, may emerge sooner than Paris would like. I have no doubt, however, that if the West comes at these East German-West German discussions with vigor and enterprise, it is the Russians who will tend to draw back and tend to keep them under control in such ways that the fears of Paris about German unity will be covered.

11. If we can succeed in a negotiation which -- in essence -- substitutes East German-West German talks on a widened basis for Western recognition of the GDR, we should make it known to the Russians that the extent to which such talks can proceed fruitfully -- and their range -- will depend on their ability to modify the character of the East German regime. Both publically and privately the "abnormal" character of Ulbricht's show should receive great emphasis.